

Changing Truths: אֱמֶת and אֱמֶת as Core Concepts in the Second Temple Period

Eibert Tigchelaar, KU Leuven

(corrected and expanded version March 30, 2017)

1. Introduction: Discussing “Truth” in Biblical Hebrew

Over the last century the meaning of Biblical Hebrew אֱמֶת, commonly rendered by ἀλήθεια in the LXX, and by “truth” or similar words in pre-twentieth century translations, has been frequently disputed. One can recognize in this debate two positions. The first position, which may be called an etymological-theologizing one, emphasizes the relationship of אֱמֶת to the root אִמַּן.¹ Since אִמַּן is taken to indicate primarily the notions of “to endure, to be firm, lasting” and “to be trustworthy, reliable, faithful,”² many scholars have argued that Hebrew אֱמֶת is different from Greek ἀλήθεια. Rudolf Bultmann, for example, argued that אֱמֶת refers primarily to the reliability or trustworthiness of persons and things, as opposed to ἀλήθεια which indicates the reality of something.³ Bultmann elaborated on this distinction in various philosophical and theological ways. Thus, he made a point of the relational and temporal character of אֱמֶת, which can only be established over time. In contrast, ἀλήθεια exists as such, and is absolute and abstract. In that sense, ἀλήθεια constitutes an absolute norm, whereas אֱמֶת can only be associated with concrete

¹Characteristic of this approach is Rudolf Bultmann, “Untersuchungen zum Johannesevangelium,” *ZNW* 27 (1928): 113-63 (section A. Ἀλήθεια), repr. in Bultmann, *Exegetica: Aufsätze zur Erforschung des Neuen Testaments*, ed. Erich Dinkler (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1967), 124-73, but see already Adolf Schlatter, *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament*, 3rd ed. (Calw - Stuttgart: Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1903), 555-65 (“Das hebräische und aramäische אֱמֶת und seine Verwandten”).

²There is some disagreement about which of the two would be, etymologically, the primary meaning. See Alfred Jepsen, “אֱמֶת ’āman,” *TDOT* 1.292-323, who concludes one cannot determine the etymological meaning (292-93) and Hans Wildberger, “אֱמֶת ’mn fest, sicher,” *THAT* 1.177-209, who commits himself to the meaning “to be firm, secure.”

³Bultmann, *Exegetica*, 128-29, 147.

appeals.⁴ Typical of Bultmann's approach is that this purported semantic difference between two words אמת and ἀλήθεια was presented as indicative and representative of two philosophically and theologically different conceptualizations of reality, a Hebrew and Jewish-Christian one, against a Greek, philosophical and gnostic, one.⁵ The second position, voiced most programmatically and famously by James Barr, advocated a semantic rather than an etymologizing or theological analysis, and argued that אמת is widely and frequently used for "truth," as opposed to "falsity," and therefore does correspond to Greek ἀλήθεια.⁶ A historical perspective was largely missing in both positions.⁷ The purpose of the present paper is not to discuss whether in the Hebrew Bible אמת

⁴Bultmann, *Exegetica*, 153.

⁵On Bultmann's concept of truth, see comprehensively Christof Landmesser, *Wahrheit als Grundbegriff neutestamentlicher Wissenschaft*, WUNT 113 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999).

⁶James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), esp. 187-200. Where Barr's study is polemic and programmatic, Diethelm Michel, "Ämät: Untersuchung über 'Wahrheit' im Hebräischen," *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 12 (1968): 30-57 presents a full semantic analysis of אמת in the Hebrew Bible, and takes the position (55) that, semantically, all attestations can be related to the notion of agreement or correspondence ("Begriff des Stimmens, bzw. Übereinstimmens").

⁷One of the very few studies which has a historical perspective on the semantics of אמת is Tamar Sovran, *Relational Semantics and the Anatomy of Abstraction* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2014), 83-96, who argues that in many languages the notion "truth" is a polysemous concept, with a tension between two main semantic frames: "(1) that of knowledge and procedures for obtaining true knowledge by verifying and confronting propositions with reality; (2) the conceptual frame of belief, trust, confidence, faithfulness, and loyalty, which is less cognitive and more connected to human emotions, dispositions, and feelings" (88), and subsequently briefly sketches the history of Hebrew *emet* (from Bible to Modern Hebrew) in relation to the shifting relationships between these two frames.

means “truth,” or something else,⁸ but rather to zoom in on the use and conceptualization of אֱמֶת in various texts, including the book of Daniel, from the Hellenistic and early Roman period.

Because Bultmann fundamentally contrasted a Hebrew, Jewish-Christian, concept of truth to the Greek philosophical and gnostic notion, he had little attention for variety or development within the Hebrew Bible. Only in the case of Daniel (especially 8:2, but also 9:13 and 10:21) he recognized what he called the absolute use of the term אֱמֶת, referring in 8:2 to the Jewish religion. He proposed without further explanation, that this use is influenced by Iranian terminology which uses the term “the truth” for the correct religion.⁹ But where for Bultmann the use of “truth” in Daniel was apparently a unique exception, Wildberger introduced a historical perspective. He proposed that Daniel, and perhaps also Prov 12:10, testifies to a new understanding of אֱמֶת, and hence also a new conceptualization of “truth.”¹⁰ In his brief discussion of אֱמֶת Wildberger referenced the general explanation of Iranian influence given by his former teacher Bultmann, but did not correlate this new understanding of אֱמֶת to that attested in the contemporary Jewish texts preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Ever since the discovery of the first Dead Sea Scrolls, it has been argued that they exhibit a new, sectarian or Essene, use of the term אֱמֶת.¹¹ While in the 1950s many scholars still looked at

⁸For all practical purposes, it is still acknowledged that depending on the context, אֱמֶת should be rendered by different modern terms. Cf., e.g., David J. A. Clines, ed., *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, Volume 1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 328-31, who first gives the general meaning “truth,” but then distinguishes between: 1. reliability, dependability, trustworthiness, faithfulness, constancy; 2. stability; 3. truth, correctness; 4. sincerity, honesty; 5. genuineness, reality.

⁹Bultmann, *Exegetica*, 129.

¹⁰Wildberger, *THAT* 1.208.

¹¹See, e.g., Friedrich Nötscher, “Wahrheit als theologischer Terminus in den Qumrantexten,” in *Vorderasiatische Studien. Festschrift für Prof. Dr. Viktor Christian*, ed. Kurt Schubert (Wien: Notring der wissenschaftlichen Verbände Österreichs, 1956), 83-92, repr. in *Vom Alten zum Neuen*

Iranian influences to account for the dualism in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, this approach has largely been abandoned. The present paper may be seen as continuing where Wildberger stopped. Does the use of אֱמֶת in Daniel reflect a new meaning of אֱמֶת? Is this meaning more broadly attested in other texts from the Hellenistic period, and should one point at Iranian influences?

In the discussion of “truth” in the Hebrew Bible, the word קֶשֶׁט received little attention. In Biblical Hebrew, the word occurs only once, in Prov 22:21, where קֶשֶׁט is juxtaposed to אֱמֶת. In the Aramaic parts of Daniel, קֶשֶׁט appears twice, in Dan 2:47 מִן קֶשֶׁט with an adverbial sense, “truly, verily,” and in 4:34 qualifying “all his (God’s) works.” Though in most Targums קֶשֶׁט or קוּשְׁטָא¹² routinely renders Hebrew אֱמֶת, the terms are not entirely coterminous.¹³ This appears from the fact that in the Targums קוּשְׁטָא also is used to render צֶדֶק, while Aramaic קוּשְׁטָא is rendered into Greek by either ἀληθεία or δικαιοσύνη, or both (1 En. 10:12). On that basis one may also hypothesize that the frequent juxtaposition of אֱמֶת and צֶדֶק in the Dead Sea Scrolls could be attempts to render two different aspects of קוּשְׁטָא. Whereas in Aramaic texts from the Achaemenid period קוּשְׁטָא is not attested,¹⁴ it become frequent in Jewish texts from the Hellenistic period as preserved in the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls.¹⁵ The investigation about a new meaning of אֱמֶת and a new concept of “truth” in the Hellenistic period, should therefore also look at קוּשְׁטָא.

Testament, BBB 17 (Bonn: Hanstein, 1962), 112-25.

¹²When referring to the noun, I will use the form קוּשְׁטָא, rather than קֶשֶׁט, קֶשֶׁט, or קוּשְׁטָא.

¹³Schlatter’s argument (*Glaube im Neuen Testament*, 563-64) that the Targums render אֱמֶת by either הִימְנוֹ or קֶשֶׁט, depending on the semantics, is not borne out by the evidence, which shows that in none of the Targums of Torah and Prophets הִימְנוֹ ever renders אֱמֶת (but sometimes אֱמוּנָה), and only rarely so in the Writings.

¹⁴The adjective בְּשִׁטָּא, though, is attested in Ahiqar 158.

¹⁵Discussion in Eibert Tigchelaar, “קֶשֶׁט qšṭ /qošt/,” *ThWAT* 9.681-86; Christian Stadel, “קוּשְׁטָא qwšṭ,” *TWQ* 3.516-20. See also, less extensively, Armin Lange, “‘So I Girded My Loins in the Vision of Righteousness and Wisdom, in the Robe of Supplication’ (1QapGen ar VI.4): קֶשֶׁט in the *Book of the Words of Noah* and Second Temple Jewish Aramaic Literature,” *Aramaic Studies* 8 (2010): 13-45.

2. The Frequency of אֱמֶת in Hebrew Texts from the Hellenistic Period

Regardless of semantics, the use of אֱמֶת has changed by the time of the second century BCE. In the Hebrew Bible, אֱמֶת is with 127 occurrences not terribly frequent. It stands on spot 140 of the most frequently used common nouns. In the so-called nonbiblical Dead Sea Scrolls, however, אֱמֶת occurs about 300 times, and stands on spot 18 of the common nouns.¹⁶ A comparable frequency is attested for Aramaic קוּשְׁטָא which is in the top 10 of the most frequently used common nouns in the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls,¹⁷ though, admittedly, about one third of the Aramaic cases is used adverbially.¹⁸ Scholars have observed this increased frequency of אֱמֶת, but rarely tried to offer an explanation.

The attestations of אֱמֶת are not distributed evenly over all scrolls compositions.¹⁹ Together, the Rule of the Community, the Hodayot, and 4QInstruction, have more cases of אֱמֶת than the entire Hebrew Bible.²⁰ In the Hodayot, אֱמֶת is even the fourth most common content word after

¹⁶Based on the texts in Martin G. Abegg, Jr.'s the "Qumran Non-biblical Manuscripts (QUMRAN)" module as available through the Accordance software. The search was for common nouns, bracketed words ignored. The results were presented as "Word Count Totals," "Analysis," sorted "Count Down," and with the exclusion of Aramaic words. The top twenty most attested common nouns are: (1) כָּל; (2) אִישׁ; (3) יוֹם; (4) אֵל; (5) בֶּן; (6) קֹדֶשׁ; (7) פֶּנֶה, though generally with a prepositional meaning; (8) עוֹלָם; (9) מִשְׁפָּט; (10) אֶרֶץ; (11) רוּחַ; (12) יָד; (13) אֱלֹהִים; (14) כְּבוֹד; (15) דְּבַר; (16) עַם; (17) מַעֲשֵׂה; (18) אֱמֶת; (19) פֶּה; (20) דֶּרֶךְ.

¹⁷(1) כָּל; (2) בֶּר; (3) אֶרֶץ; (4) מֶלֶךְ; (5) עַלְמָא; (6) שְׁבִיעַ; (7) תִּרְעָה; (8) יוֹם; (9) קִשּׁוּט; (10) שְׁנָה.

¹⁸If one would exclude all cases of בְּקִשּׁוּט, then קִשּׁוּט would drop to spot 18/19.

¹⁹For the most recent surveys of אֱמֶת in the scrolls, see Stephen Hultgren, "אֱמֶת 'æmæt," *TWQ* 1.227-37, and Carol A. Newsom, "עוֹלָה 'āwæl," *TWQ* 3.47-53, with a discussion on עוֹלָה/עוֹלָה as opposed to אֱמֶת on pp. 50-53.

²⁰43 times in 1QS, the Cave 1 copy of the Rule of the Community or Serek ha-Yahad; 69 times in 1QH^a, the Cave 1 copy of the Hodayot or Thanksgiving Hymns, but up to 9 occurrences are badly

רוח, ידע, and עולם. Because of its frequent use in the Rule of the Community, the Hodayot, as well as the War Scroll,²¹ אמת has been seen as characteristic of the so-called Qumran sectarian writings. The term אמת would be one of the major terms with which the group would designate its nature and life-style. The sectarians would describe themselves as those who “do the truth,” “walk on the paths of truth,” or are “the sons of truth.” This explanation may hold true for the Rule of the Community. However, in the Hodayot most references are to the אמת of God,²² and there are only a few self-references using אמת in 4QInstruction.

Also קושטא is found extremely often in a small number of works. Disregarding its adverbial use, which is most often found in direct speech, it is the most important key-word in 4Q542, the Testament of Qahat, a key-term in the Enochic Apocalypse of Weeks (1 En. 93:1-10; 91:11-17), and also rather frequent in the Book of Watchers (1 En. 1-36). If we can go by the Ethiopic words that elsewhere correspond to קושטא,²³ then it was also frequently used in the Epistle of Enoch (1 En. 94-105), especially its concluding chapters. It appears in high density at the beginning of the Book of Noah in the Genesis Apocryphon (col. 6) and at the beginning of Levi’s speech in the Testament of Levi or Aramaic Levi Document.

legible or largely reconstructed; 42 times in 4QInstruction (excluding cases where two different manuscripts both preserve the same occurrence of אמת). 4QInstruction was originally provisionally called “Sapiential Work A,” and has the alternative title Musar le-Mevin (abbreviated to MLM).

²¹Twelve times in 1QM, the Cave 1 copy of the War Scroll.

²²Almost half of the occurrences are with the second masculine singular suffix, אמתך or אמתכה, all in hymnical address of God.

²³The available evidence indicates that *ṣadq* rendered *δικαιοσύνη* and *rät’* ἀλήθεια in 1 Enoch, and that *δικαιοσύνη* and ἀλήθεια were two different renderings of קושטא. Lange, “I Girded My Loins,” suggests that in 1 En. 1-36 קושטא was only rendered by *δικαιοσύνη*, but see Tigchelaar, “קשט *qšt* /*qošt*/” The translation variation is larger in the Ethiopic Bible, but cf., e.g., Gen 24:27 τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, rendered as *lašədqu walarät’u*.

One may easily observe linguistic and conceptual correspondences between אמת and קושטא, such as corresponding collocations, like “paths” or “generations” of אמת and of קושטא. And perhaps the use of קושטא in older Aramaic texts such as the Enochic books, may have had an impact on the choice for אמת in the Hebrew Dead Sea Scrolls.²⁴ However, hitherto there has been no attempt to give a comprehensive literary, historical, or cultural explanation. This paper strives to give some explanations. Since this paper will focus on correspondences, it cannot pay attention to all peculiarities of individual texts. This also holds true for the methodological problem that all these texts, with the possible exclusion of the Testament of Qahat, demonstrably had a complex literary history, which we, however, can only reconstruct to a limited extent.

3. The Claim of Iranian Influence

In his discussion of Dan 8:12, which mentions how the horn “will cast truth to the ground,” וְתִשְׁלֹךְ אֱמֶת אֶרְצָה, Wildberger refers to Bultmann who suggested the influence of Iranian *Sprachgut*, where “truth” would refer simply to “religion.” Bultmann here neither mentioned any “Iranian” term, nor referred to any primary or secondary source, but he apparently thought of Mandaic *kuṣṭā*, which, besides its other meanings, he considered to also signify the Mandaic religion.²⁵ Bultmann, of course, was not a specialist in Iranian religions, but depended on the scholarship of Wilhelm Bousset and Richard Reitzenstein, who believed that one could trace back to ancient Iran

²⁴For example, the phrase מטעת אמת, a “planting of truth,” in 1QH^a 16:11, suggests a direct dependence on the Aramaic נצבת קושטא which is found in 4Q204 1 v 4 (1 En. 10:16 τὸ φυτὸν τῆς δικαιοσύνης καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας) as well as 1QapGen 14:13 (and perhaps 4Q537 13 1). The imagery is probably derived from Isa 60:21 and 61:10-11, which associates the shoot with the righteous (צדיקים) and righteousness (צדקה).

²⁵See especially his “Johanneische Schriften und Gnosis,” *OLZ* 45 (1940): 150-75 (esp. 158-59), repr. in *Exegetica*, 230-54 (esp. 237-38), where he spells out that “*Kuṣṭā als terminus technicus ... anscheinend auch die mand. Religion bezeichnen kann*” but “*nicht die mand. Religion als historisches Phänomen, sondern als ‘numinöses’ bzw. ‘eschatologisches’ Faktum.*”

traditions found in Manichaeism and Mandaism. Bultman apparently extended this to the semantics of words, and assumed that the purported meaning of Mandaic *kušṭā* could therefore explain אֱמֶת in Daniel.²⁶ It is, in my opinion, more remarkable that Wildberger, forty years later, in discussing אֱמֶת in Daniel, still quotes, without any reservation, Bultmann's explanation. After all, Wildberger was not only an Old Testament scholar, but also an expert on Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Mandaism,²⁷ and belonged to those scholars who in the 1950s had argued for a close connection between the Zoroastrian concept of the two twin spirits of "Truth" and "Lie" and the רִחוּת הָאֱמֶת וְהָעוֹל, "the spirits of truth and of injustice," in the so-called "Two Spirits Treatise" in 1QS (3:13-4:26).²⁸ One wonders whether Wildberger, when quoting Bultmann, would also have thought of Mandaic *kušṭā*, or rather of Persian *aša/arta*.

Ever since the 1950s, connections between the Two Spirits Treatise and Iranian religion had been proposed as well as disputed or ignored by both scholars of Judaism and Iranologists.²⁹ Klaus Koch was the first in the early 2000s, to argue for a similar connection between the Enochic Apocalypse of Weeks (1 En. 93:1-10; 91:11-17) and Zoroastrian thought.³⁰ He submitted that the

²⁶It is not clear how this appeal to an Iranian concept of "truth" relates to this binary description of two kinds of truth, a Hebraic one and a Greek one.

²⁷Frank Jehle, *Hans Wildberger (1910-1986): Eine theologische Biografie* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2015), 178-81 on Wildberger's publications and courses on those three Iranian religions.

²⁸Hans Wildberger, "Der Dualismus in den Qumrānschriften," *Asiatische Studien: Zeitschrift der schweizerischen Asien-gesellschaft* 8 (1954): 163-77 (in a volume in honor of the indologist Emil Abegg).

²⁹See, most recently, Albert de Jong, "Iranian Connections in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 479-500, with ample reference to earlier relevant literature.

³⁰Klaus Koch, "History as a Battlefield of Two Antagonistic Powers in the Apocalypse of Weeks and in the Rule of the Community," in *Enoch and Qumran Origins*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 185-203.

depiction in the Apocalypse of Weeks of the concept of קושטא versus the concepts of חמסא and שקרא, “violence and lie,” namely as cosmic forces struggling throughout history, stood so far from Judaism and so close to Iranian thought, that one should assume an originally Iranian scheme and Iranian concept that was used and slightly modified by a Jewish author.

In both cases, the Two Spirits Treatise and the Apocalypse of Weeks, there are dualistic oppositions which some scholars have wanted to explain by reference to the Zoroastrian opposition of *aša* and *druj*, often rendered by “truth” versus “lie.” The debate about possible Iranian influence has often zoomed in on the question to what extent Judaism could have adopted the dualistic world-view of Zoroastrianism. I proffer that one might approach the question of influence differently. If one supposes at all some kind of correspondence between Iranian *aša* and *druj*, Aramaic קושטא and שקרא, and Hebrew אמת and עולה, then one should inquire whether the correspondence pertains exclusively to the dualistic opposition. Or, has the concept of קושטא and אמת, as found in Second Temple texts, developed or expanded semantically in a manner that could be explained through the influence of Iranian ideology?

We are now, a century after Reitzenstein, much more aware of the numerous obstacles if we want to explore points of correspondence between Ancient Judaism and Iranian Religion in the Persian and Hellenistic period. Apart from the Old Persian inscriptions, we have few contemporary sources that shed light on the Achaemenid ideology, and we are not certain to what extent Iranian religion of that period can be reconstructed on the basis of the much earlier Avestan literature, the much later Zoroastrian commentary texts, or the few reports of Greek authors.³¹ Also, interpretations and translations of the Avesta are notoriously different, which makes the detection of possible correspondences very uncertain for nonspecialists. To give two extremes: Stanley Insler’s translation of the Gathas³² immediately reminds us of the language of the Qumran texts; Oktor Skjærvø’s literal translations create, intentionally, a world that is far more

³¹On the latter, cf. especially Albert de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature*, RGRW 133 (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

³²Stanley Insler, *The Gāthās of Zarathustra* (Leiden: Brill, 1975).

alien.³³ And then, after the 1950s Christian scholars became very reluctant to acknowledge the possibility of Iranian influences, and strongly prefer models of internal Jewish development.

Our point of departure should be that in the case of Ancient Judaism, there is little evidence of cultural isolation. Developments should therefore not be explained exclusively as internal evolutions independent of cultural encounters; rather, such developments may have been triggered or enhanced by influences from other cultures, but only if those were felt to be compatible.³⁴ In addition, we should steer away from the parallelomania of earlier generations. Philologists may demand close linguistic parallels, as concrete evidence of direct influence, but those are largely missing. From a religious studies point of view, however, systemic correspondences are equally important, both heuristically, and culturally-historically. I take the position that both the Two Spirits Treatise and the Apocalypse of Weeks reflect some schemas that have parallels in Zoroastrian texts. Even Peter von der Osten-Sacken, who fervently argued that the dualism of the Qumran scrolls was an internal Jewish development triggered by the Antiochean crisis, had to admit that a few features, like the notion of the two spirits, somehow had come from Iran.³⁵

Assuming correspondences is different from explaining them. Cultural interaction between Persians and Judaeans (whether in Judea or elsewhere) may be posited for the Achaemenid period, but there is no evidence that Judaeans would have known the Avestan literature. Koch adduces a cultural-linguistic element, proposing that certain Persian concepts were promulgated more broadly through the Aramaic Koine, and became part of the world-view of the Persian and Hellenistic world. This would hold for the spread of the Persian concept of *aša*/

³³Prods Oktor Skjærvø, *The Spirit of Zoroastrianism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

³⁴See, for example, Wendy Doniger, *The Hindu: An Alternative History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 20: “an imported idea takes root only if it also responds to something already present in the importing culture.”

³⁵Peter von der Osten-Sacken, *Gott und Belial: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Dualismus in den Texten aus Qumran*, SUNT 6 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 140.

arta as the “order of life,” through Aramaic ארטא, and subsequently from Aramaic into Hebrew אמת.³⁶ However, for the question whether אמת or ארטא might have taken on elements of *aša*, several aspects need to be discussed.

4. “Truth” in Achaemenid Persia (and Beyond)

The assumption that אמת or ארטא in the abovementioned texts reflect Avestan *aša* (or Old Persian *arta*)—as well as the common belief that, when Greek texts speak about the virtue of ἀλήθεια or ἀληθεύειν among the Persians,³⁷ this is a rendering of *aša/arta* and *ašavan/artāvan*—needs to be questioned, though. First, Iranologists disagree about the basic meaning of *aša*. While many favoured the meaning “truth” during the mid-twentieth century, more recently, Skjærvø³⁸ and others insist that *aša* is “order,” both of the cosmos, of political society, and of human behaviour.³⁹ Skjærvø also emphasizes that in the Avestan writings *aša* and *druj* are not simply antonyms. While *druj* can denote a speech act, namely denying the reality of *aša*, the Avestan texts never use *aša* but other words for *speaking* truth or untruth such as *ərəš*, “straight, truly,” versus *miθah*- “falsehood, shifting” (or, in Old Persian *rāsta*, “straight,” versus either *miθah*- or *zūrah*-,

³⁶Koch, “History as a Battlefield.”

³⁷The linguistic proof of the association of ἀλήθεια and *aša* is only provided by Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 46-47, who states that Horomazes (Ahura Mazda) created six gods, of which the second is ἀλήθεια, which corresponds to the place of *aša* as second of the Amesha Spentas (Y. 47.1).

³⁸Cf., especially, Prods Oktor Skjærvø, “Truth and Deception in Ancient Iran,” in *Ātaš-e Dorun: The Fire Within: Jamshid Soroush Soroushian Memorial Volume II*, ed. Carlo G. Cereti and Farrokh Vajifdar (Bloomington, IN: 1st Books Library, 2003), 383-434. Also, e.g., Skjærvø, “Zoroastrian Dualism,” in *Light Against Darkness: Dualism in Ancient Mediterranean Religion and the Contemporary World*, ed. Armin Lange et al., JAJSup 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 55-91.

³⁹Amir Ahmadi, “What is *aša*-?” *BSOAS* 78 (2015): 293-315 rejects both translations, “truth” as well as “order,” and proposes “cosmos.”

“crooked”).

Second, while *aša* and derivatives such as *ašauuan-*, “follower/sustainer of Order,” are extremely common in the Avestan writings, in the Achaemenid period the term (*arta*) is only attested, as *artācā*, “according to the Order” (or: “properly”?) and *artāvan*, “follower of Order” (or: “blessed”), in Xerxes’ Daiva Inscription (XPh, lines 41, 50-51, 53-54, resp. 48 and 55), as well as in proper names. Even where one might expect references to *arta*, these are missing. Thus, for example, in his Bisitun inscription (DB 63), Darius does not describe himself as a “sustainer of Order,” but rather as not being a liar, not being an evildoer, and having acted in righteousness (*arštā-*). The latter is related to *rāsta-*, “straight, right,” which is much more frequent in the Old Persian inscriptions, and which in some collocations is close to Avestan *aša*. For example, in Darius’ Naqsh-e Rostam inscription, *rāsta-* is contrasted both to *miṣah-* “shifting, crooked,” and forms of *druj-*, “lie.” The presently available evidence would suggest that, at least in the Old Persian inscriptions, the concepts of righteousness and truth as expressed in *rāsta-* has replaced, or rather taken over, some of the notions of Avestan *aša*.⁴⁰

Third, with regard to semantics, Aramaic קשיט and קושטא largely overlaps that of *rāsta-* and *arštā-*. Like the Aramaic terms, *rāsta-*, can refer to a path (“straight”), to speaking, as well as to ethical behaviour.⁴¹ Given that in the presumed time of Persian influence the term *arta* is hardly attested, and *rāsta-* includes some of the notions of Avestan *aša*, the proposed connection between אמת and קושטא, and Persian *aša/arta* would seem to be at best indirect, through *rāsta-*.

Fourth, terms are not identical to concepts. In the Avestan texts, *aša* refers both to multiple perspectives: the cosmic conflict between order and chaos, is reflected on the political level, on the social level, as well as on the plane of individual human behaviour. Though the Old Persian inscriptions largely focus on the political level and the behaviour of the king, a similar

⁴⁰Andrew G. Nichols, “The Iranian Concept *aša* and Greek Views of the Persians,” *Studi Classici Orientali* 62 (2016): 61-96, admits that the term *arta* is hardly attested in the preserved texts of the Achaemenid period, but argues (64-65) that the concept *aša* was prevalent.

⁴¹Skjærvø, “Truth and Deception,” 416-22.

systemic understanding of order and opposing chaos is implied. Previous scholarship has mainly focused on the feature of dualism in Persian religion, and the question to what extent such a dualism could have been adopted by Jewish or Christian groups. Conceptually, the systemic correlation between the different levels, from cosmic to individual (and, one might add: from creation to eschatology) is equally important.

For the study of קושטא and אמת in Hellenistic Period texts, and the purported influence from Persia, the observations described above result in the following hypotheses. First, from semantic and historical perspectives, a connection between *rāsta*- and קשיטא or קושטא seems more likely than that between אמת and *aša/arta*. Only indirectly, through קושטא, should one account for possible Persian influence on אמת.⁴² Second, regardless of the precise correspondence of terms (*aša* or *rāsta*-), an assumed contact between Persian ideas and (in this case) Aramaic or Hebrew speakers would primarily affect the conceptual level. Rather than wholesale adoption of alien ideas, one should expect to find a development through extension or modification of already existing ideas, visible through the semantic expansion of native terms.⁴³ Third, since concepts can be expressed in various ways, they may be put into different words. This already holds true for the Avestan texts, where the conflict between order and chaos is expressed through terms like good and evil, light and darkness, or life-giving against death-making. But these oppositions are not

⁴²Koch, "History as a Battlefield," supports his thesis of the primacy of קושטא on the Kandahar Aśoka bilingual inscription (Greek and Aramaic), which states that king Aśoka "established what is right" (קשיטא מהקשט) in the tenth year of his reign, from which point on "the doing of evil decreased" (מן אדין זעיר מרעא). Comparison with the Aśoka's Indian inscription demonstrates that קשיטא corresponds to Aśoka's dhamma, and given the former Iranian background it is most likely that the translator associated this with *rāsta*- (rather than *arta*). For a fresh regional contextual interpretation of the Kandahar inscription, see Nayanjot Lahiri, *Ashoka in Ancient India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 167-75.

⁴³Methodologically this principle runs counter to the common idea that one should attempt to explain any development as an internal development, untainted by foreign influence.

stable, and one can find, for example, the contrast between the Life-Giving Spirit and the Evil Spirit (Y. 13:13). Similarly, the Two Spirits Treatise contrasts light to darkness, and *אמת* to *עול* or *עולה*, but it also features other terms like *צדק* and *רמיה*. And in Mysteries, the opposition *צדק* versus *עולה* is found (1Q27 1 i 5), rather than *אמת* versus *עולה*. 4QInstruction teaches a series of oppositions, including *אמת ועול*, but also wisdom and folly, as well as good and evil, and sweet and bitter.

5. Truth in the Dead Sea Scrolls

The *Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten* argues that all the meanings of *אמת* known from Biblical Hebrew are also present in the scrolls,⁴⁴ but that 4QInstruction, the Rule of the Community, and the Hodayot, exhibit a development from the biblical concept of *אמת* to the Qumran one. Hultgren provides an overview of *אמת* in those three texts, arguing for a development from the Hebrew Bible, through 4QInstruction, to the Rule of the Community and the Hodayot.⁴⁵ Above I noted the very frequent use of *אמת* in those texts. This precludes a full discussion but requires a focus on new collocations, with new meanings, or in different discourses.

The most striking innovations in the use of *אמת* (and *קושטא*) are:

- (1) the notion of *אמת* as a cosmic principle, expressed in the texts in terms of foundation
- (2) a semantic shift of *אמת* when used with regard to God
- (3) *אמת* as an epistemological term, parallel to *בינה* and other terms
- (4) *אמת* and *קושטא* as the core virtue.

5.1. *אמת* as cosmic principle

The most striking semantic expansion of *אמת* is especially apparent in the Hodayot⁴⁶ and

⁴⁴Hultgren, “*אמת* ’*æmæt*,” 228-29.

⁴⁵Hultgren, “*אמת* ’*æmæt*,” 229-35. The chronological relationship of 4QInstruction to those other compositions, has, however, become moot.

⁴⁶The presently authoritative edition of the Hodayot, with new numbers for columns and lines, is

4QInstruction,⁴⁷ where אמת, and in the Hodayot often סוד אמת, is associated with wonders. Several times in the Hodayot and once in the Rule of the Community, אמת is juxtaposed to רזי פלא, “wonderful mysteries,”⁴⁸ while in 4QInstruction אמת is closely related to the strange רזי נהיה,⁴⁹ to the extent that they sometimes seem to refer to the same. The term סוד אמת is not easy to understand. In the texts, the word סוד can mean “counsel” or “secret,” as in Biblical Hebrew, but also “foundation” or “essence” as a byform of יסוד.⁵⁰ The parallelism of סוד אמת with רזי פלא (e.g. 1QH^a 19:12-13) would suggest the meaning “secret,” or “secret council,” but other juxtapositions, such as the parallelism with “the fountain of insight” in 1QH^a 13:28 would suggest “foundation.” 4QInstruction (4Q417 1 i 8-9) refers to the אוש, “foundation,” of אמת, and, in a different context, the Rule of the Community (1QS 5:5) to the founding of a מוסד אמת. The two notions of “secret” and “foundation” are not only used with respect to אמת. Works like the Hodayot, 4QInstruction, and

Hartmut Stegemann, Eileen Schuller, and Carol Newsom, *1QHodayot^a with Incorporation of 1QHodayot^b and 4QHodayot^{a,f}*, DJD 40 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2009).

⁴⁷Editio princeps: John Strugnell, Daniel Harrington, and Torleif Elgvin, *Qumran Cave 4.XXIV. Sapiential Texts, Part 2: 4QInstruction (Mûsâr l' Mēvîn): 4Q415ff*, DJD 34 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999). Corrections to the edition are given in Eibert Tigchelaar, *To Increase Learning for the Understanding Ones: Reading and Reconstructing the Fragmentary Early Jewish Sapiential Text 4QInstruction*, STDJ 44 (Leiden: Brill, 2001). A more easily accessible text and translation of the major sections can be found in Matthew J. Goff, *4QInstruction* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013).

⁴⁸1QH^a 15:29-30; 19:12-13; 19:19; 1QS 9:18.

⁴⁹Thus also Hultgren, “אַמֶּת ’æmæt,” 230. On the *raz nihyeh*, cf. most recently and extensively Arjen Bakker, “The Figure of the Sage in *Musar le-Mevin* and *Serekh ha-Yahad*” (Ph.D. thesis, KU Leuven, 2015; forthcoming in *Studies on the Texts from the Desert of Judah*), 85-156. Throughout this article, I am indebted to insights discussed in Bakker’s dissertation.

⁵⁰The most recent discussion is Heinz-Josef Fabry, “סֹד sôd,” *TWQ* 2.1073-79. Bakker, “Figure of the Sage,” consistently renders סוד with “essence,”

Mysteries (1Q27; 4Q299-4Q301), develop the concept of hidden causes or origins, whether expressed by *מעין*, “well,” *שרש*, “root,” or by a series of words referring to foundation. Understanding these normally hidden causes results in comprehending everything that ensues from them. 4Q417 is a manuscript of 4QInstruction that seems to have a variant literary version.⁵¹ The first column of this manuscript (4Q417 1 i) mentions the laying out of the foundation of *אמת* as the first of a series of clauses using creational language. The description suggests that the *אמת* is the foundation, or the ordering principle of creation. From this perspective, *סוד אמת* explicitly refers to this aspect of *אמת*, which may explain why the terms *אמת* and *סוד אמת* alternate in the Hodayot. This idea of an ordering principle of creation, or rather of cosmos or nature, is, of course, not unique to this work, but is found, with all kinds of variations, both in the East as *rta* or *aša*, and in the West as the Law of Nature. In 4QInstruction we see an attempt to develop a Hebrew conceptual idiom to express this concept and other views. While some of the terms in 4QInstruction, notably the unexplained word *אֹיט* or *אָט*, might be entirely new lexical items, for other cases, like *אמת*, we seem to have semantic neologisms.

A connection between *אמת* and creation also appears in phrases which indicate how God apportioned all creatures by weighing and measuring with instruments of *אמת* and *צדק*.⁵² Functionally, such references seem to be parallel to statements in the Hebrew Bible, as in Jer 10 and 51, and Prov 3, that God founded the world with his wisdom (*בחכמה* or *בִּחְכָּמָתוֹ*), and established the heavens with his understanding (*בתבונה*). In 1QH^a 9 (the hymn about creation which originally was thought to be the first column of the scroll) *חכמה* still is one of the means by which God creates (lines 8, 9, 16, 21). However, in 4QInstruction the function of *חכמה* is expanded, or taken over, by *אמת* and *צדק*.

⁵¹Based on the plausibility that 4Q416 1 and 4Q417 1 i, with different content, both preserved the first column of their respective scrolls.

⁵²Menahem Kister, "Physical and Metaphysical Measurements Ordained by God in the Literature of the Second Temple Period," in *Reworking the Bible: Apocryphal and Related Texts at Qumran*, ed. Esther G. Chazon, Devorah Dimant, and Ruth A. Clements, STDJ 58 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 153-76.

5.2. God has אמת, God is אמת

Within the scrolls, there are many references to the אמת of God, sometimes in the phrase אמת אל, but more generally constructed by אמת with a suffix referring to God: אמתו or אמתכה. English translations of the scrolls routinely render “his (or: your) truth,” but German and French ones also render אמת with “Treue” and “fidélité.” What, then, is the אמת of God? In view of the expression ולוא לסור מחוקי אמתו ללכת ימין (1QS 1:15), in the clause חקי אמתו, and ושמאל, one has ventured that אמת served as a synonym of either the *covenant* of God, or rather the *torah* of God.⁵³ One should then prefer *torah* of God since חקי ברית אל (CD 5:12) or חקי בריתך (in 1QH^a 8:33) also seem to refer to God’s law. However, it is unlikely that אמת simply refers to the revealed Torah of Moses. The Hodayot often refer to God’s אמת as something which he made known to the hymnist, alongside the mysteries. One might therefore, with Hultgren, associate אמת not with the law as such, but specifically with the hidden, correct interpretation of the law which had been revealed only to the community.⁵⁴ The Damascus Document, for example, lists those as his holy sabbaths, his glorious festivals, his righteous laws, the paths of his אמת, and the tasks of his will (CD 3:14-15). This use of אמת to refer to “the revealed correct interpretation of the law” perhaps fits well with some of the occurrences in the Rule of the Community. In the Hodayot and 4QInstruction, however, אמת is more encompassing, and refers to the entire order of the cosmos and the proper behaviour ensuing from it. In 4QInstruction, both אמת and the רזי פלא are explicitly connected to past, present, and future, which one needs to study in order to be able to walk perfectly in all one’s actions.

In many cases, therefore, God’s אמת can be explained as God’s order. But does that mean that this meaning is always implied in the scrolls? Occasionally, for example in 1QH^a 14:28, where

⁵³For these two options, cf. already P. Wernberg-Møller, *The Manual of Discipline, Translated and Annotated with an Introduction*, STDJ 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1957), 47 (note 27). Most recently, Hultgren, “אמת” *’æmæt*,” 232-33.

⁵⁴Hultgren, “אמת” *’æmæt*,” 232-33.

the hymnist confesses that he relies on God's אמת, here exceptionally translated by Newsom not as "truth" but as "faithfulness," this could be explained that the hymnist trusts that God will act according to his order.

In two texts, one in the Hodayot (1QH^a 7:38)⁵⁵ and one in 4QInstruction, God is referred to as אל אמת, both times in a context which refers to the final annihilation of evil. In 4QInstruction, the concluding phrase בי אל אמת הוא, is preceded by a description of destruction of evil that ends with a problematic clause which might be read as עוד ישלם קץ האמת,⁵⁶ which I would translate as "then again he will make perfect the period of אמת."⁵⁷ The phrase אל אמת, then, is found in the context of judgment, which can elsewhere be connected with קושטא, and which also may be indicated in the phrase משפט אמת. However, another possibility is that אל אמת expresses that God is the guarantor of order, which will be fully and finally restored in the eschaton.

5.3. אמת and Knowledge

The notion of knowledge and insight is central to many of the scrolls. Throughout the Hodayot, the hymnist thanks God for having taught or instructed him, or for having given him insight into his אמת. One may note here the hiphils of the different verbs, הודיע, השכל, and הבין all of which are construed with either אמתכה, or סוד אמתכה. Also, אמת is regularly connected with דעת, where, for example, דעת אמתו should not be interpreted as "his true knowledge," but rather as "knowledge of his אמת." Or אמת is simply placed in parallelism with terms like דעת or בינה. Though parallelism or juxtaposition need not imply identity, this may suggest that אמת is not only the cosmic order,

⁵⁵"For you are a God of truth, and all iniquity you will destroy forever, and no wickedness will exist in your presence" (Newsom).

⁵⁶The phrase is preserved 4Q416 1 13 and 4Q418 2 5 (with the variant עוד/עד). The reading of האמת is uncertain.

⁵⁷In similar cases (e.g., 4Q215a 1 ii 4, ביא שלם קץ הרשע), however, שלם means "to come/to bring to an end." That, however, hardly fits the context, so that one either needs to restore something different from האמת, or opt for another meaning of שלם.

but also the understanding of, or insight into, this order. Interestingly, the Qumran texts emphasize different aspects on how one acquires this understanding. The Hodayot continuously praise God for having bestowed knowledge upon a person in lowly state who cannot understand by him or herself. In 4QInstruction, knowledge, insight, and אמת are an inheritance, but in other sections this work emphasizes the need to continuously pursue and search knowledge and perform deeds of אמת.

5.4. אמת and קושטא as Core Virtue

Those sections that refer to אמת as the foundation, also mention that all works are based on her. In most of the works referenced above, a prime or foundational importance is given to אמת and קושטא as human virtues. This is clearly the case in the Two Spirits Treatise. Embedded in this treatise is a section on human behaviour (1QS 4:2-14, sometimes called the Two Ways) that is connected to the two different spirits, as a catalogue of virtues and vices. The virtues (in 1QS 4:2-8) are entirely framed by the concept of אמת. Not only are the virtues implicitly associated to the רוח אמת,⁵⁸ like the vices are explicitly assigned to the רוח עולה,⁵⁹ but the short section initially labels in 1QS 4:2 these virtues as the דרכי צדק אמת, and sums them up in 1QS 4:6 with the conclusion אלה סודי רוח לבני אמת תבל, “these are the spiritual foundations for the sons of אמת in the world.” Also in other sections, אמת regularly has the prime position. For example, in 1QS 8:1-2, the text refers to the twelve laymen and three priests, who behave perfectly according to that what has been revealed from the Torah, namely לעשות אמת וצדקה ומשפט ואהבת חסד והצנע לכת איש עם רעה, “that they may practice truth, righteousness, justice, kindly love, and circumspection one towards another.”⁶⁰ A similar phrase is found in 1QS 5:3-4, here with לעשות אמת יחד at the head of the phrase, “together they shall practice truth and humility, righteousness and justice, kindly love and

⁵⁸Mentioned in 1QS 3:18-19: רוחות האמת והעול and in 4:23 רוחי אמת ועול.

⁵⁹1QS 4:9-14, starting with ולרוח עולה.

⁶⁰Translation from Michael A. Knibb, *The Qumran Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 128.

circumspection in all their ways.”⁶¹

In the so-called Testament of Qahat (4Q542), קושטא stands at the head of a list of seven characteristics which form the heritage of the clan of Levites, namely וישירותא וצדקתא וקושטא וכהונתא ודכותא וקודשא וכהונתא, “truth, righteousness, uprightness, perfectness, purity, holiness, and the priesthood” (4Q542 1 i 12-13). The first item in the list, קושטא, need not be the most important one. The seven characteristics can be seen as seven increasing steps or scales, leading ultimately to the climax of the priesthood of the Levites.⁶² Nonetheless, קושטא is the most central term in this text, being mentioned five more times outside of the list,⁶³ while the other six terms are mentioned only once or not at all outside the list.⁶⁴

The prime importance of קושטא is expressed explicitly in another work of the collection of Levitical writings, the Aramaic Levi Document. There Levi admonishes his children and grandchildren, and starts by announcing that he will instruct them and show קושטא to them (ALD 13:2).⁶⁵ This does not simply mean that he will tell them the truth. Levi continues immediately with ראש עובדיכון יהוי קושטא ועד עלמא יהוי קאים עמכון, “let the most important of all your deeds be קושטא, and it will be with you forever” (13:3a). This preamble continues with another broken saying (13:3b) beginning with וקושטא וצדקתא, to switch a few lines later to an entire section (13:7-16) on the importance of wisdom.

On the basis of these texts, I propose that קושטא or אמת was the prime virtue. This reminds us of the exposition on the strength of ἀλήθεια in the contest story in 1 Esd 4:34-41.⁶⁶ It also

⁶¹But note that the text in 4Q258 lacks the phrase אמת יחדו, thus reading “they shall practice humility, righteousness, justice, kindly love and circumspection in all their ways.”

⁶²The first three also occur, in Hebrew, in the same sequence, in 1 Kgs 3:6.

⁶³4Q542 1 i 4, 9, 1 ii 2, 8.

⁶⁴צדקה in 4Q542 1 i 8; ישירו in 1 i 12.

⁶⁵Jonas C. Greenfield, Michael E. Stone, and Esther Eshel, *The Aramaic Levi Document: Edition, Translation, Commentary*, SVTP 19 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 102-3.

⁶⁶A. Hilhorst, “The Speech on Truth in 1 Esdras 4:34-41,” in *The Scriptures and the Scrolls: Studies in*

may be connected to what Greek authors reported about the Iranians. One example is Porphyry when he refers to the influence of the Magi on Pythagoras: “These are the things he taught, but above all to speak the truth” (*Vit. Pyth.* 41). However, in the Jewish texts “truth” as a virtue clearly encompasses more than only “speaking the truth.”

5.5. Bringing Everything in Order

It is unlikely that those four innovations are unrelated developments. I proffer that there is a strong connection between אמת as the foundational order of nature, or order of creation, and קושטא and אמת as the chief of virtues. The notion that one should live according to the laws of nature established by God is common in Hellenistic Jewish literature,⁶⁷ and stands at the core of 4QInstruction. It is a characteristic of these texts that the ability to perform those virtues is to a large extent dependent on the knowledge and given understanding of that order of nature. Here it is both God who has created that order, and who makes it known to some. 4QInstruction even states אמת סוד אמת, “כי אל הדעות סוד אמת,” “for the God of knowledge is the foundation of order” (4Q417 1 i 8). An ontological understanding of this phrase would bring us close to either Zoroastrianism or Stoic thought, but is not supported by slightly different phrasings in the Rule of the Community and the Hodayot which claim that *from* or *to* the God of knowledge originate or belong, all things.⁶⁸

Honour of A.S. van der Woude on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday, VTSup 49 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 135-51.

⁶⁷Cf., e.g., Philo, *Mos.* 2:48 Moses “... wished to show two most essential things: first that the Father and Maker of the world was in the truest sense also its Lawgiver, secondly that he who would observe the laws will accept gladly the duty of following nature and live in accordance with the ordering of the universe, so that his deeds are attuned to harmony with his words and his words with his deeds.” Cf. Hindy Najman, “The Law of Nature and the Authority of Mosaic Law,” in *Past Renewals: Interpretive Authority, Renewed Revelation and the Quest for Perfection in Jewish Antiquity*, JSJSup 53 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 87-106

⁶⁸1QS 3:15 מאל הדעות כול הווה ונהיה, “From the God of knowledge comes everything that is and will

5.6. Daniel 8:12

What light does this shed on “truth” in Daniel? Daniel 8:12 is notoriously difficult, textually, grammatically, and with regard to meaning, especially because of the first word **וְצָבָא**.⁶⁹ I will only comment on the function of **אֱמֶת** in the verse. Within the verse **אֱמֶת** is opposed to **פֶּשַׁע**. Within the broader range of the chapter we also find the opposition between **אֱמֶת** in v. 12 and **מְרֻמָּה** in v. 25. The notion of **אֱמֶת** being thrown to the ground (**וְתִשְׁלַךְ אֱמֶת אֶרֶצָה**) is unique, but clearly takes up the language of verses 7 (**וַיִּשְׁלִיכֵהוּ אֶרֶצָה**) and 11 (**וְהִשְׁלַךְ מִכּוֹן מִקְדָּשׁוֹ**). Though the wording and imagery are unique, the general notion of a struggle between “order” or “truth” and “rebellion” or “deceit,” in which the latter temporarily may overcome the further, is confirmed by the description of v. 23-25 which hints at a periodization which we find in, e.g., the Apocalypse of Weeks and in the introduction of 4QInstruction (4Q416 1). One should therefore read Dan 8:12 as an explicatory comment on 8:11: the disruption of the temple sacrifice in v. 11 is phrased in v. 12 in the cosmic terms of the struggle between order and rebellion. I therefore do not understand **אֱמֶת** with, e.g., Wildberger as a word referring to the Jewish religion,⁷⁰ or to temple sacrifice, or to the Jewish law.⁷¹ I agree more with Newsom, who associates **אֱמֶת** with “world-order,” though she focuses on order as the course of history,⁷² where one should more generally refer to the cosmo-political order which is disrupted.

6. Theological Lines

be” (Knibb); 1QH^a 9:28-29 **לְכָה אֵתָה אֵל הַדְּעוֹת כּוֹל מַעֲשֵׂי הַצְדָּקָה וְסוֹד הָאֱמֶת**, “To you, yourself, God of knowledge, belong all righteous deeds and true counsel” (Newsom).

⁶⁹For an overview of the different kinds of solutions, see John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 334-35.

⁷⁰Wildberger, “**אֱמֶת** ’mn fest, sicher,” 208.

⁷¹Collins, *Daniel*, 335.

⁷²Carol Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 265-66.

In the concept of **אמת** as “order” different theological lines from the Hebrew Bible come together. **אמת** stands in the line of earlier wisdom traditions which describe how God created the world through wisdom and insight, but now specifies that this is through (his) **אמת**.⁷³ But God does not only arrange the world by **אמת**, but also lays **אמת** as a foundation (4Q417 1 i 8-9). That is, **אמת** serves as the *order* of creation. With **אמת** also involving the order of time, ranging from creation until the elimination of evil, it also serves as a correction of Qoh 3. God *does* make known **אמת** to the hymnist or the *mevin*, so that, contrary to Qoh 3:11, one *can* perceive what God has done from the beginning, and will do to the end.

The reference to cosmic or natural order as basis for ethical behaviour might suggest a universalist tendency. However, apart from one reference to the nations who will know God's **אמת** and glory,⁷⁴ knowledge of or belonging to God's **אמת** is restricted to individuals, clans, or groups who are chosen to or by **אמת**, or who are given insight. In the Enochic and Noahic works, those are the protagonist, Noah's descendants, or Abraham and hence Israel, as well as the eschatological righteous ones. The notion of election together with **קושטא** and **אמת** is found explicitly in several texts. The Apocalypse of Weeks refers to those who are chosen (**בחרין**) as witnesses to **קשוט**, and 4QInstruction addresses its audience as **בחירי אמת**. In the Levitical works, such as the Testament of Qahat, the motif of inheritance develops the Hebrew Bible concept that the Levites do not have land as inheritance, but that God himself is their inheritance. The emphasis on **קושטא** as this Levitical inheritance may also be associated with Isa 54:17, **זאת נחלת עבדי יהוה וצדקתם מאתי**. A similar thought may lie behind 4QInstruction, which also takes us the Isaianic *'ebed* language, for example in an address like **כי אתה עבדו ובחירו**, “because you are his servant and his chosen one.”⁷⁵ More generally, an appeal to cosmic order, and the emphasis on **קושטא** and **אמת** as the prime

⁷³Cf. 4Q418 126 ii **פרשם באמת הוא שמם**, “he has spread them out, with **אמת** he has placed them.” Cf. possible also 4Q181 2 8 and 4Q418 127 5 for **תכן** with **אמת**.

⁷⁴1QH^a 14:15 “Thus all the nations will acknowledge your truth and all the peoples your glory” (Newsom).

⁷⁵Joint reading of 4Q416 2 ii 14 and 4Q417 2 ii 18.

ethical principle, can be most easily imagined in priestly circles.

7. Groups

Finally, the self-designation of groups as a **נצבת קושטא** or **מטעת אמת**, “a shoot/planting of truth/righteousness,” or as **בני אמת**, “children of truth,” might indicate that **קושטא** and **אמת** became ideologically and sociologically key-words which differentiated authors and audience from other groups. This would imply that **אמת** and **קושטא** were not general theological core concepts, but rather those of a specific movement that distinguished itself from other ones. I will signal one possible distinction.

The **אמת** texts abound with language of understanding and instruction, such as the verbs **ידע**, **השכיל** and **הבין**. The corresponding participles **משכיל** and **מבין** refer to the sages in those texts. The nouns **בינה**, **שכל**, and **דעה** are central in texts like 1QS. In comparison, **חכמה** and **חכם** are more poorly attested in those texts.⁷⁶ The distinction simply may be semantic, since the object or content of **חכמה** is different from that of **בינה**. For example, **חכמה** would be sometimes associated with skills, be they manual or magic.⁷⁷ The differentiation may, however, also be social. The Damascus Document (CD 6:2-3) interprets Deut 1:13, “Choose for each of your tribes individuals who are wise (**חכמים**), discerning (**נבונים**), and reputable to be your leaders” as follows: “And He (God) raised from Aaron discerning ones (**נבונים**), and from Israel who are wise (**חכמים**).” This association of Aaron with discerning ones could hint at a priestly preference for terms from the root **בין** above those from **חכ**, which would explain relative paucity of **חכ** terms in the Scrolls.⁷⁸ From still another perspective, terms like **מבינים** or **משכילים**, may have been developed

⁷⁶On these terms in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Bakker, “Figure of the Sage,” 53-69.

⁷⁷4QInstruction refers to the **חכמת ידים**, and the Mysteries text seems to connect **חכמים** to magic. See, e.g., Eibert Tigchelaar, “Wisdom and Counter-Wisdom in 4QInstruction, Mysteries and 1 Enoch,” in *The Early Enoch Literature*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and John J. Collins, JSJSup 121 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 177-93.

⁷⁸The difference does not hold true for all the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the Aramaic Levi Document,

intentionally into markers of the members of one group, in distinction from other group or groups which, according to rabbinic tradition, referred to their leaders as חכמים. This then, would explain why the remarkable frequency and the special semantics of אמת in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls are not attested in later rabbinic literature.

Conclusions

The change of meaning of אמת in Second Temple texts can best be explained against the background of a Persian concept of “truth” that relates to cosmic order, insight in this order, and corresponding righteous behaviour. There is, however, no evidence that אמת simply rendered Persian *aša/arta*. Rather, we hypothesize a terminological trajectory from Avestan *aša* being replaced by Achaemenid *rāsta-/arštā-*, rendered in Aramaic by קשיט and קושטא, and finally to Hebrew אמת, as a calque of Aramaic קושטא. Conceptually, this new meaning of אמת combines and develops different cosmological, epistemological and ethical notions that are attested in Hebrew Bible and Second Temple texts. Like “wisdom,” and subsequently “torah,” אמת is a means and the principle of creation. Again like “wisdom,” it is the source of knowledge and insight. And like צדק, another possible rendering of קושטא, it has ethical notions. Sociologically, the extensive and specific use of אמת and קושטא may be typical of a movement related to the Dead Sea Scrolls, as opposed to the group that developed into the rabbinic tradition.

Levi admonishes his children both to perform קושטא and to acquire wisdom (חכמה).